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PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: RELEVANT ACTIONS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER BODIES OF RELEVANCE TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

Letter dated 19 February 1992 from the representatives of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to forward you the declaration adopted by the Presidents of the Amazonian States in their second meeting, held in Manaus, Brazil, on 10 and 11 February 1992 (see annex).

We request that this declaration be circulated as an official document of the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

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ANNEX

Declaration of the Second Meeting of Presidents of the Amazonian States

The Presidents of the Amazonian States, having met in Manaus on 10 and 11 February 1992, with the purpose of examining the issues that will be considered by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, hereby adopted the following:

MANAUS DECLARATION ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

1. We are convinced that an environmentally sound planet should correspond to a socially and economically just world. In order to achieve this objective, it is essential to transform behaviour and development models and non-sustainable patterns of consumption.

2. In our countries, the imperative of economic and social development should be related to environmental conservation and protection, through the promotion of strategies for the sustainable use of natural resources and respect for the right of citizens to a better quality of life. We affirm therefore the right of our countries to use their own resources to ensure their well-being and progress.

3. We reaffirm the importance of education and public awareness; therefore, we pledge to fully support efforts aimed at increasing public knowledge and commitment to sound environmental practices. We further commit ourselves to the strengthening of environmental education and call on the international community to support this action.

4. We reaffirm our conviction that international production, consumption, and distribution patterns are at the origin of the environmental problems being faced by developing countries, particularly the deterioration of the ecosystems, and the poverty to which most human beings have been condemned.

5. The greater responsibility of developed countries for the progressive deterioration of the environment is recognized, which is a further reason why they cannot intend to impose ecological controls and conditionalities on developing countries.

6. Underdevelopment in its turn is both a fundamental cause and a serious effect of environmental deterioration. The solution of environmental problems is thus intimately connected to a new attitude towards international cooperation in terms of expansion of financial resources, increased access to technologies, expanded commercial flows, and measures aimed at solving the problem of the foreign debt.

7. Urgent internal actions aimed at eliminating poverty will not be sufficient if they are not supported by international cooperation based on new principles.

8. Furthermore, in order to overcome the present environmental problems, conscious and determined efforts are required on the part of States and individuals which should transcend the mere logic of market forces.

9. Since the signing of the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation on 3 July 1978, our countries accepted a profound and broad commitment to undertake actions aimed at attaining harmonious development in the region, whose features are clearly conceived and defined in the Treaty. This unique commitment enabled our countries to be provided now with a wide scope of policies and strategies through which it will be possible to attain sustainable development goals in this region.

10. We recognize the rights of indigenous populations and their contribution to conservation of the environment. We believe that a greater participation of these populations in this effort will be positive. With this aim, we are adopting significant measures, among which special mention must be made of the effort undertaken to respect the rights of indigenous populations in relation to their lands, according to national laws. Therefore, consistently with the mandate received from the first Ibero-American Summit, held in Guadalajara, we have assessed the progress that has been achieved and we reaffirm our support for the establishment of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Populations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

11. We are intent on continuing to promote our efforts aimed at the conservation of the largest native forest in the planet and its sustainable development, dedicating the resources within our reach to these purposes.

12. In this connection, we reaffirm the principles and objectives of the Manaus Declaration, of 6 May 1989, in which our countries have established our common interests in the Amazonian region, particularly with regard to the future cooperation towards the development and conservation of this patrimony.

13. We also reaffirm that this committment will not be sufficient without an international cooperation in support of the efforts undertaken by our States in the discharge of their responsibilities and in the exercise of their sovereignty.

14. We reaffirm our disposition of strengthening bilateral and subregional cooperation, in order to prevent environmental damage and to manage their consequences.

15. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be the historical opportunity for beginning new global relations translated into financial and technological cooperation programmes, making it possible for developing countries to deepen the efforts they have been undertaking to

conserve and stimulate the sustainable development of their natural resources. This is why we are intent on contributing to ensure its success together with the remaining Latin American and Caribbean countries, with which we have adopted, in March 1991, the Platform of Tlatelolco on Environment and Development.

16. We have agreed upon a joint understanding on the main issues before the Conference. We believe that this understanding will meet the expectations of the whole international community. This joint understanding is contained in the following position document to guide the delegations of our countries in the negotiations leading to the Conference.

JOINT POSITION DOCUMENT OF THE AMAZONIAN STATES FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

I. Climate change

1. Present trends of global climate change will bring profound implications to the environmental and economic development of our countries, including islands and low-lying coastal areas. We urge the developed countries, mainly responsible for the cumulative concentration of greenhouse gases, to adopt concrete measures to reverse those trends.

2. Negotiations centring on a framework convention on climate change constitute a unique opportunity for the international community to reach commitments to reverse the trend towards an increase in concentration of all greenhouse gases. Those commitments are necessarily differentiated with regard to developed and developing countries and should not affect the economic and commercial interests of the latter. Developing countries will only be able to join the international efforts towards climate protection if they are assured of the necessary financial and technological resources for the adoption of a new sustainable development model.

3. It is necessary that each country adopt the energy model best suited to its own as well as to global needs. Required adaptations lead to the substitution of lifestyles and consumption patterns that are unsustainable with regard to future generations.

II. Biological diversity and biotechnology

1. Biological resources are unmistakably natural resources of each country, which therefore enjoy national sovereignty over them. Immediate action is necessary to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Consequently, countries should implement these activities, with the support of international cooperation, on the basis of intergovernmental agreements.

2. The recognition of the rights of countries of origin of biological diversity, including mainly of genetic resources, is fundamental. The adoption of, and compliance with, adequate registration, regulation, and control systems is absolutely necessary.

3. Cooperation between developed countries and countries which are rich in biodiversity is necessary, particularly with the aim of strengthening local research and institutional capacity.

4. Greater emphasis should be placed on the use and sustainable development of these resources than on their mere conservation, so as to maximize and disseminate their benefits.

5. Conservation of biological diversity should have an integrated character, preferably carried out in protected areas, and areas defined by ecological and economic zoning. In this regard, regional cooperation is important. The ecological and economic zoning programme conceived and developed within the scope of the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation is a worthy example in this respect.

6. In situ and ex situ research in countries of origin should be particularly supported and encouraged. International cooperation aimed at maintaining genetic banks is necessary.

7. Biological diversity and biotechnology have a close relationship, constituting one of the clearest opportunities for sustainable development. Biotechnology depends in great measure on the conservation of genetic and biological resources, particularly in developing countries which are rich in biological diversity.

8. It is necessary to enhance and protect the traditional methods and the knowledge of indigenous populations and local communities. Their participation in the economic and commercial benefits derived from the use of biological diversity is necessary, so as to ensure their economic and social development opportunities.

9. Our interest in the success of the negotiations on a convention on biological diversity is clear. This convention should reflect the necessary relationship between access to the resources of biological diversity and particularly access to the biotechnology originating from it, as well as to the technology necessary for its conservation.

10. Access to the resources of biological diversity should necessarily include those resulting from biotechnology, as well as native and cultivated resources. International cooperation is needed to promote the endogenous development of research on biotechnology in countries of origin of the biological resources.

III. Forests

1. The international debate on forests should take into account that these ecosystems are part of territories inside State jurisdiction, where these States fully exercise their sovereignty. It is up to States to legislate over these areas according to national priorities.

2. Any global consideration on forest resources must necessarily include all types of forests and must not discriminate against any region.

3. It is fundamental to recognize the importance of forests as an economic, cultural and social space, besides being an environmentally important one. The interaction between these elements constitute an indivisible unity, very ample and complex. Forest policies constitute an important development strategy in our countries.

4. The economic dimension of forests encompasses the natural forest patrimony. It includes mineral reserves, energy sources, tourist potential and possibilities of human occupation for productive activities. Their social and cultural dimensions consist in their function as habitat of human populations, native or not, which depend on the forest for their survival and cultural development.

5. National efforts aimed at developing a sustainable use of forests must be supported by the international community.

6. Emphasis should be given to enhance the economic use of the native forest for its positive environmental, social and economic effects. Nevertheless, timely and sufficient market access for the different forestry products is indispensable.

7. Forest management should reconcile the imperative of its economic enhancement for the benefit of national societies, so as to secure dignified living conditions to those dependent on them for their livelihood, with adequate environmental protection. Developing countries present in this respect specific needs which should be considered in the decisions taken by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

8. The economic activities taking place in forests can be made compatible with conservation and protection of the environment and natural resources. To this end, countries should develop sustainable forest utilization strategies and have access to markets for their products in order to make their sustainable development possible.

9. These strategies should seek compatibility between short-term actions and long-term perspectives, reflecting future opportunities. The cost-benefit approach should enhance social equity, improved technological efficiency of the production processes, conservation of natural resources, respect for cultural values of local communities as well as for their knowledge of traditional forest uses.

IV. Soil degradation

1. It is increasingly important to reverse the growing trend towards soil degradation, such as erosion and desertification, and the prevention of those problems. Unsustainable agricultural production processes, inadequate use of technologies and disorganized land occupation have been producing serious environmental impacts resulting in damage to agricultural production that undermine the food security of developing countries.

2. Combat of drought, river basin conservation, protection of forest cover, integrated use of soil and freshwater resources are fundamental.

3. It is necessary to promote the occupation of land according to its environmental configuration and its development potential, both dynamically conditioned by scientific and technological breakthrough. The importance of preventive and corrective actions in protected areas is noteworthy. It is essential, however, that these measures be also implemented in agricultural areas.

V. Freshwater resources

1. The environmentally sound management of freshwater resources is a fundamental element of ecosystems conservation as well as the protection of human health and the promotion of well-being.

2. The close interaction between integrated management of freshwater resources and the protection of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, biological diversity and rational land use should be recognized. Sustainable development programmes for freshwater resources should be identified at local, national, regional and global levels, as well as the effective means for their implementation.

3. In this regard, the measures taken at national and regional levels for the integrated management of river basins are important. These measures are essential for the correct use of freshwater as a source of productive activities, such as irrigation, fishing, production of energy and transportation, as well as for controlling polluting agents, adopting measures to prevent and control environmental risks, and protecting the health of the populations.

4. The quality of life of populations is closely linked to the supply of potable water in quantities and quality corresponding to their needs. In this respect, States should establish precise goals for their supply requirements in the next decade following a well-defined time-frame.

5. Institutional capacity-building, public awareness, education, and availability of funds are necessary elements for an integrated management of freshwater resources. National efforts towards an integrated management of river basins should be recognized by the international community and receive its cooperation.

VI. Hazardous and toxic wastes

1. Hazardous and toxic waste should be disposed of or eliminated at its production site. Destination countries should have adequate technology for an environmentally sound management of such wastes.

2. In order to deal adequately with the problem, the negotiation of a protocol to the Basel Convention should be concluded as soon as possible, establishing appropriate procedures regarding liability and indemnization of damages resulting from transboundary movement and management of hazardous wastes.

3. It is also necessary to analyse, in light of the Basel Convention, the existing norms, regulations and practices regarding dumping of hazardous wastes in the sea so as to recommend any additional measure within the scope of the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matter (London, 29 December 1972).

4. Moreover, it is indispensable that the international community should implement the mechanism established by resolution 44/226 of the United Nations General Assembly with regard to the illicit traffic of toxic products and waste, which are destined to monitor and to denounce such traffic.

VII. Institutional strengthening

1. Institutional strengthening, as a requirement for promoting sustainable development, should be guided by the objective of enhancing the combination of decisions of an economic nature with environmental protection strategies. Overcoming the institutional dichotomy between these two fields is a goal to be attained both by the States, domestically, and by international organizations. This should be one of the main elements of innovation in dealing with issues related to environment and development.

2. Priority should be given to strengthening national institutions in order to promote sustainable development. Likewise, we emphasize the importance of strengthening regional institutions. International cooperation represents a clear basis for the conservation and rational use of the natural patrimony.

3. On a global level, creative formulae must be sought in order to provide the United Nations with stronger and more efficient mechanisms to adopt the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The planning and implementation of their actions must be defined with the full participation of developing countries, so as to meet their priorities. In this connection, these institutions should be capable of supporting, according to the specific needs of each country, measures and programmes implemented by them with a view of achieving sustainable development.

VIII. Human settlements

1. The problems affecting urban life have also a global dimension inasmuch as their consequences transcend national frontiers. Over the last 20 years,

industrialized countries have accomplished evident improvements of the living standards in their cities with large sums of money and new technologies. In the developing countries, on the contrary, the situation of urban agglomerations is reaching critical levels with serious unforeseeable consequences. It is up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to adopt, within the scope of Agenda 21, a programme of concrete actions to modify this situation in developing countries.

2. The programme of Agenda 21 referring to human settlements should include access to basic services such as sanitation, housing, drinking water, security, energy supply and transportation. In this context, both urban slums and rural settlements should equally deserve attention, as well as shelter provision for the "no-income" groups of population and the critically poor.

3. It is necessary to develop the means for education, public awareness as well as training aimed at the adequate treatment of problems such as violence, homeless children, disposal and management of domestic and industrial wastes, unemployment, disorganized and unplanned occupation of land and lack of basic sanitation.

4. The implementation of necessary initiatives in developing countries requires additional resources from international cooperation.

IX. Indigenous and local populations and communities

1. In the context of the improvement of the quality of life of indigenous and local populations and communities, it is necessary to recognize the value of their traditional knowledge and practices for the promotion of sustainable development. Mechanisms to protect traditional knowledge and for compensation of appropriation and commercial use of their knowledge should be created. Therefore, it is necessary to guarantee conditions for their self-development, to support the development of their own environmentally sustainable alternative means of production and to strengthen national institutional mechanisms, so as to promote their development and protect and guarantee their habitat.

2. It is equally important to guarantee respect for the rights of the indigenous population and local communities so as to preserve their cultural identity. National efforts for the promotion of sustainable development of these communities are fundamental, supported by increased international technical and financial cooperation, particularly within the context of the International Year of Indigenous People to be celebrated in 1993.

X. Financial resources

1. The attainment of the objective of integrating environment and development requires a new international cooperation spirit. This new spirit is based on the understanding that developed countries and developing countries are partners in the same cause and that the economic and environmental benefits derived from this cooperation will be common.

2. In their efforts to attain this common objective, however, the countries have available to them extremely unequal financial means and capabilities. Consequently, developing countries face many limitations in participating in the global efforts.

3. The industrialized countries have a historical responsibility for the presently unsustainable situation of the environment on a global scale. For this reason, and because of their economic and financial capacity, they should assume a proportionately greater responsibility in the sustainable development process.

4. In this connection, new and additional financial flows must be assured to developing countries under adequate conditions, so that they may fulfil the obligation to protect the environment and promote development.

5. A solution must be found for the serious issue of the foreign debt of developing countries, because it undermines their capability to adopt vital policies and measures to implement sustainable development strategies.

6. Likewise, protectionist barriers imposed on international trade must be eliminated, whether being traditional or environmentally conceived non-tariff barriers. On the other hand, it will be necessary to value natural products and to price them according to their value.

7. The new financial resources should be channelled through appropriate institutional mechanisms, on a concessional basis, without conditionalities, operating in accordance with the priorities of the recipient, and treating in a harmonious way issues related to the environment and development. Such resources, moreover, should meet the needs of the populations of developing countries in terms of an environmentally sound socio-economic development.

8. The representation in these mechanisms and their management should comply with the criterion of equity between developed and developing countries. For all of these reasons, it should be understood that the financial mechanism called "Global environmental facility" is a clearly limited and insufficient instrument. It is essential to conceive mechanisms to make it possible for the countries to implement the guidelines and action programmes of Agenda 21, and thus promote sustainable development. Likewise, the multilateral legal instruments being negotiated should include financial mechanisms of their own, with the above-mentioned features.

XI. Transfer of technology

1. Effective consolidation of new mechanisms of transfer of technology is necessary to ensure environmentally appropriate technologies to developing countries. Due to financial and institutional limitations of developing countries, access to these technologies should be on a preferential rather than on a purely commercial basis, considering the main responsibility of developed countries for the environmental deterioration as well as the common interest of the international community in the protection of the global

environment. Transfer of new environmentally sound technologies to developing countries is a condition for the fulfilment of environmental and development commitments to be made during the United Nations Conference for Environment and Development, as well as in the conventions on biological diversity and climate change now under negotiation.

2. It is also important to increase national and regional capabilities not only to absorb environmentally sound technologies, but also to carry out scientific research and develop technologies of their own. Developed countries should support such efforts on a bilateral and multilateral basis.

Manaus, 10 February 1992

Signed by the Presidents of:

Bolivia
Brazil
Colombia
Ecuador
Guyana
Peru
Suriname
Venezuela